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SPEECH

OF

MR. J. R. CHANDLER, OF PENN.,

ON THE

ADMISSION OF CALIFORNIA:

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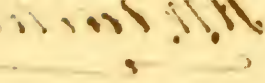
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES,

MARCH 28, 1850.

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SPEECH.

Mr. CHANDLER addressed the Chair as follows :

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The approved method of commencing a speech on the questions now before the committee, has come to be an assurance that the undertaking is a departure from a fixed resolution, enforced by a sense of duty to the orator or his constituents. For myself, sir, I am free to confess, that from the day on which the question was committed, I had resolved to offer my opinions upon the measure.

I am satisfied that enough had been said some weeks ago in this House to show, not only the general merits of the question now before the committee, but also the feelings of sections and individuals on this important subject. Having obtained the floor after so much time expended in the effort, I naturally feel that I have reached the field after the battle has been fought, and therefore must content myself with such a use of my position as circumstances will allow.

But, sir, I despair of *attracting*, as I feel I cannot *reward*, attention. I believe that some speakers have distinguished themselves by bold and extravagant doctrines, much more than they have helped their cause, or assisted the country by their advocacy; and I think it my duty to present moderate views, and to advocate them in a moderate tone. I am unable, Mr. Chairman, to take sides with those who might represent the old women that ask for a peaceful dissolution of this Union. I feel for the weakness that suggests the appeal, and the dependence which might compel its advocacy. I am no less unable to approve the calls for disunion which come from the young men, who mistake the momentary applause which a surprising act elicits, for the substantial fame which finally rewards him who pursues the even tenor of a course that insures national peace and national union.

It is pleasant, undoubtedly, to enjoy the ephemeral distinction which ultraism earns—to hear the passenger in the street designate the man who had uttered the severest thing against the truth, or had most distinguished himself by approximation to paradox:

“It is brave to be admired—to see
The crowd, with pointing finger, cry ‘that’s he.’”

I shall not even give expression to my own feelings, unless incidentally, on the abstract question of Southern-slavery, nor presume to approach another species of bondage in which the mind is sometimes held by that terrible chain, a single idea.

The great difficulty necessarily encountered by those who would obtain the floor, causes a delay in prepared remarks, which renders a portion of the argument untimely; and the physical exertions necessary to make one’s self heard in this Chamber of magnificent reverberation, too often dissipates the few ideas that have not become obsolete by delay. I had prepared an argument upon the question of admitting California as an independent State, and the propriety of allowing the other territorial possessions to remain under the present rule; but so frequently has the ground been trodden since I undertook to obtain the floor, and so elaborate have been the arguments, that I shall less weary the committee, I am persuaded, by leaving the constitutional question to other hands, and taking up for consideration some of the remarks which have

fallen incidentally from the speakers who have preceded me—remarks which seemed at the time to meet with applause on one side, while they excited astonishment on the other. I have listened to every speech that has been made to this committee on the question before us, and I can bear testimony to the earnestness and ability which have marked most of the efforts on both sides. Your own, Mr. Chairman, (Mr. TOOMBS,) seemed to me to be distinguished for clear argument and correct deductions, though I might doubt the premises. But I hope I shall be excused if I say, that the fabric which has been presented on the Southern side of the House will not bear close inspection; the material is not what the whole would intimate, and I have drawn a thread here and there from web and woof, and purpose to submit each to a minute investigation.

The discussion of the question of admitting California has almost naturally brought up the vexatious question of slavery, and brought out an expression of feeling from the North against that institution, and inspired in the South the customary laudation, and given rise to rather more than the usual jeremiads upon the injuries to which the South has been subjected by the North—wrongs, as it is asserted, of an unendurable character and incalculable extent. I was struck with the lamentations of the honorable gentleman from North Carolina, (Mr. CLINGMAN,) who opened this discussion, and who certainly distinguished himself by the freedom of his complaints and the boldness of the remedies proposed.

Sir, the honorable gentleman spoke of the decayed commerce of North Carolina, as if her quays and shores had once bristled with the masts of the navigation of the world, and her canvass bellied to every wind that disturbed the ocean. I looked up, sir, to see whether Tyre and Venice would not be cited as illustrations of the terrible changes in the wasted commerce of that good old State, which, according to the idea that the gentleman conveyed, has ceased to be “great among nations, and princess among provinces.”

North Carolina, sir, I doubt not, has had changes; her peculiar position exposes her to them, and will expose her to them while she depends upon exactly the same institution which serves the more Southern States with a different climate, a different soil, and a different produce. But, sir, the change of which the honorable gentleman complains does not come from any aggressive acts of the North. No action of the North has had any thing to do with her situation. It is her own want of action; or, rather, it *was* her own want of action. The institution which she cherishes with so much affection, and defends with so much zeal, is proving its own want of adaptation to a large portion of the State; and it is only as she is getting clear of the evil that she feels a recuperative power.

The cry of the South, so often and so confidently repeated on this floor, is groundless, causeless, sir, entirely; no wrong has been meditated, none inflicted—none even cited here, with the single exception of the refusal or neglect of some of the free States to provide for a fulfilment of that clause of the Constitution of the United States which requires the restoration of fugitives from labor. That subject has been handled elsewhere with so much ability, that it is unnecessary for me to refer to the constitutional argument. While it cannot be denied that the restoration of fugitive slaves, fleeing to some of the free States, is neither secured nor encouraged by law, it may be allowed to me to make a few remarks upon the causes which changed the practice that certainly did exist, at least in Pennsylvania. The demand for the fugitive called into action a class of men, who, fortified with a constable's commission, made it a matter of special business to detect and restore to slavery the absconding servant; and the law lent its sanction and its aid to the practice. At

length the danger of detection taught the fugitive caution, and the professional "slave finder" found his occupation less profitable; but, in the mean time, his profession must sustain his stomach; he must lean on his trade for support, and if he could not catch and restore to his master the fugitive slave, he must catch and try to send into slavery the free black; and this was frequently attempted, and was, as is believed, often successful. The solitary hut of the negro, on each side of the Delaware, was invaded by the king of the kidnapers, and a marketable being drawn thence to meet a demand, not from slaveholders, but slave-dealers; and whether *suspicious* did or did not draw the felon into respectable private dwellings, he presented himself where there were black servants, and boldly dragged them away before some magistrate, where there were at hand witnesses enough to swear to the identity of the prisoner as some runaway slave. This was not always successful, nor do I mean to say that the prisoner was not always a "fugitive from labor;" but the course pursued, and the character of those engaged therein, served in a respectable and philanthropic community to excite the strongest feelings against that institution which exposed the blacks to such injury, and left the whites in danger of such domiciliary visitations. Is it strange then, sir, that there should have gone up to the legislature strong remonstrances against a law that operated to shield one or two of the greatest scoundrels that ever disgraced society, while they were engaged in the most reprehensible conduct that ever *disturbed* a community? Public sentiment, sir, which was fixed against slavery, and which had banished it from Pennsylvania, was directed against this evil; and coincident with some of these outrages was, if I mistake not, that *dictum* of the Supreme Court of the United States, which put the mark—at least the charge—of unconstitutionality upon the State laws providing for the restoration of fugitive slaves; and the laws have yielded to public feeling. Honorable gentlemen declare all this to be wrong; denounce all this as a violation of the Constitution, and an outrage upon the South. Will they tell me, sir, how they keep in South Carolina that command of the Constitution of the nation which is conveyed in the following words: "The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States?" This is a part, and an antecedent part, of the same section which the South charges the North with violating; and the South knows that it does not allow to the citizens of the free States the immunities which they have a right to demand. This is recrimination, sir, I confess; but it is just in its application, and serves to show at least that public feeling sometimes blinds men to constitutional right.

At this moment, sir, the South points to the advantage which the North enjoys in her commerce and manufactures. Sir, there has never been any prohibition of commerce at the South, excepting such as nature gave in the character of the country, and such as convenience introduced and maintained, in the condition of her institutions.

The North was commercial—the wealth of the people was acquired by, and vested in, commerce; and in the midst of the activity and enterprise which created and kept up a commercial marine unequalled in the history of business, (all circumstances considered,) the legislature of the nation, moved and influenced by the South, paralyzed the arm of commerce, wasted the wealth of the merchant, and made the seaports monuments of the influence of oppressive laws.

What did the North *then*, sir? Did she add to her lamentations for losses, threats of, and movements toward, disunion? No, sir. She felt that a majority had administered the Constitution with a most afflictive severity—but still it was the Constitution. She kissed the rod, and placed the remnant of her

capital, saved from the wreck of commerce, in manufactures, and used the arguments of the Southern orators to have their new investment protected. It was occasionally protected, and it occasionally flourished. That protection, however, was never felt, in any one particular of its effect, more than in the reduction of the prices of its produce, which followed its continuance. Still, sir, the protection has been insufficient, because it has been only temporary—it has been *spasmodic*, and yet the South complains of that.

Why, Mr. Chairman, while the North came late—nearly thirty years after the adoption of the Constitution—to have a small share in protection, and that share often rendered more injurious than profitable, by the want of permanency; the South, sir, has had her products sustained by a continual, unwavering protection from the moment the Constitution was adopted. Yes, sir; rice and cotton have had constant, unchangeable, complete, sufficient protection, and the producers have enjoyed the advantages of their condition.

If it should be demanded where and how rice and cotton have been protected, I answer, that in almost every article of trade in this country, (slaves, perhaps, excepted,) the ingredient which is most costly, and which gives value thereto, is labor. Coal and iron feel this, and every fabric of the loom and produce of the field confesses the truth of the axiom, that it is the amount of labor that gives it value. Well, sir, cotton and rice are produced by the labor of slaves, and the Constitution of this country has protected that species of labor, so that free labor can enter into no competition with it. The great ingredient, then, of cotton and rice is amply, fully protected by the Constitution; and sugar, sir, another produce of the South, has, besides the constitutional protection upon its *producing* power, the additional advantage of import duties upon the same product of rival countries. Why should the South complain?

In the course of this debate, it has been openly asserted that slavery is a blessing—a domestic, social, moral, and political blessing—a blessing to the servant as well as the master. I am no abolitionist, no fanatic—have no prejudices beyond a fixed opinion upon the subject of slavery; but I hope I shall not offend, when I point to the opinion thus uttered, as a painful, mournful proof of the evils of that institution. Nothing but its injurious effect could have brought the minds of republicans to such a state.

It was the remark of Mr. Jefferson, sir, I believe, (I have heard it quoted as his,) that “so true as there is a God in Heaven, so true will this nation be punished for the sin of slavery.” And I shall take the liberty of adding, so true as there is a God in Heaven—“and that there is, all nature cries aloud, through all her work”—so true as there is a God in Heaven, the nation is now afflicted, and being punished for slavery—punished, sir, in the consequences. What else has alienated the feelings of the South from the North? What else has brought discord into the councils of the nation? What else has led to the feelings manifested, and language used here, indicative of divided interests and hostile resolves?

If the institution of slavery is really good—socially and politically good—why has not some State, that has abolished it within its limits, invited it back? None have—not one. Not one could be hired to do it. There has certainly been some little appearance of affection toward the institution by States, which were losing the distinction of slavery; but this is evidently the result of pride, and not of fondness for it. Maryland, for example, has more than once here, upon this floor—and her legislature has recently—shown a sensitiveness upon the subject, and Maryland is fast becoming a free State. This sensitiveness is *pride*—it must be excused—it will not retard the emancipation, nor keep back the exodus of the institution. And Maryland, sir, I venture to say, would not have it kept back; she loves to talk of her own constitutional privilege of sla-

very, but she would not call it back, if it had gone. An honorable member from the South recently mentioned to me that, some time since, one of his servants—of whom he has a large number—expressed a wish to marry the female slave of another planter; the master represented the possibility of the departure of the other person, and the consequent rupture of family relations—but the black man ventured. A few years after that, the colored husband felt that “the course of true love never did run smooth.” The owner of his wife resolved to move to Mississippi. The husband was afflicted. His master bade him go and inquire what the owner of the wife would take for the servant, and, if the price was fair, he would purchase her. The next day, the liberal master asked the slave what was demanded for his wife? O, replied the husband, he asks twice as much as she is worth; let her go, I would not buy her. And so, sir, freed States say of slavery—it costs more than what it is worth—let it go.

The honorable gentleman from Florida (Mr. CABELL) read to us, some time since, a portion of scripture, in which God commanded Hager to return to her master’s house, “which,” said the honorable gentleman, “was a command to return into slavery;” and of course, as is to be inferred, an approval of modern slavery. Sir, it is an axiom of law, that “what proves too much, proves nothing;” and the command of God, if it expressed approval of the institution of modern domestic slavery, expressed equal approval of another domestic institution which existed in the family of Abraham, but which I am sure the honorable gentleman does not mean to applaud.

The honorable gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HILLIARD) was carried by his fine classical taste and attainment to Athens, for proof of the conservative power of slavery, as that State survived all others of ancient Greece, and was especially distinguished for her institution of Helotism. And the honorable gentleman remarked, that as the traveller approached the shores of the country, his eye rested with peculiar gratification upon the tomb of Themistocles, as the great object for delightful reminiscence. Did not the classical enthusiasm of the honorable gentleman get the better of his republican instincts, when the great object for his admiration in that land of fading glories was the tomb of the aristocrat, who, unable to submit to the decision of the people, shrunk away into suicide? I will not say that the peculiar institutions, among which the gentleman was reared, had any influence on his classical taste; but it would seem to me, that the true American would have raked the soil of Athens for the ashes of the republican Aristides—the man who not only submitted to the will of the majority, right or wrong, but even assisted one of that majority to inscribe his (Aristides’s) name upon the shell that produced his own ostracism.

If slavery was the perpetuating power of Athens, the preserving principle, then St. Paul was probably greatly mistaken, when, standing on Mars’ hill, he alluded to the thousand altars on every hand, inscribed to every feeling, passion, and attribute that distinguish and disgrace our kind, and which were imputed to the gods of their idolatry. Paul found one dedicated to “the Unknown God,” and he supposed that He was the God of Heaven, and so announced it; but if the surmises of the honorable gentleman are true, that single altar must have smoked with incense to the dark spirit of slavery—the only protecting and preserving power to which the Athenians had dedicated no special devotion.

Why, sir, the honorable gentleman might as well have imputed to the pure Paganism of the Greeks the perpetuity of that State, and have ascribed the honor to Jupiter Olympus, who, with his court, occupied the summit of the neighboring mountain, or have given credit to the goddess who gave her name to the city and the State. Commerce, the arts, and philosophy, preserved Athens; but slavery—white slavery—not so injurious to manners as black sla-

very, but far more deleterious to morals—white slavery, sir, that placed the blandishments of beauty against the weak barriers of philosophy—undermined that virtue without which a State cannot endure. It was the consequence of that institution that the home virtues perished in Athens; and Pericles, the glory of the State, sacrificed the duties and comforts of the domestic hearth to the meretricious charms that weakened the virtue of the purest philosopher, and destroyed the peace of the loftiest orator.

Sir, Athens has perished; her glories departed; her temples crumbled to ruin; her altars are lost; her means of commerce wasted; her Pyreus is choked with her unthroned gods; and all that constituted her beauty and her boast has departed; nothing is left but her slavery; *that* is like some mineral in the human frame, which seems for a time to give tone to the system, though it finally eats it away, and remains itself alone, a solitary monument of its own power to destroy.

Sir, it is dangerous to appeal to antiquity to sustain modern errors; and my honorable friend, when he turned to Athens for support, was like the trembling and falling Saul, summoning the spirit of the departed Samuel. The awful apparition denounces the present as full of wrong, and points it to a futurity as full of consequent evils.

The honorable gentleman from Mississippi, (Mr. McWILLIE,) some days since, remarked that General Taylor had, in the last Presidential canvass, been advocated at the South as a friend of slavery, and at the North as its decided opponent; and my honorable friend from Ohio (Mr. DISNEY) repeated the same charge, with some additional emphasis and circumstance. These gentlemen may have had in mind “the life of General CASS,” with the memorable shifting pages, which worked praise for him at the South as a friend to Southern institutions, and at the North presented him as a friend of freedom. Sir, I had a considerable share in the last canvass, and I heard nothing of the kind in Pennsylvania—no votes asked for upon the statement that General Taylor was an anti-slavery man. General Taylor was voted for by the *Whigs* as a sound *Whig*. He was voted for by many opponents of slavery, with a knowledge that he was a slaveholder, but with a belief that, in all questions of national policy and constitutional right, he would submit to the votes of a majority. He was voted for by many “Friends,” with a full knowledge that he was a warrior in command—a general—but with a full knowledge that he was a lover of peace, and perhaps with the consciousness that whoever might be elected, the successful man would be a captain-general and commander-in-chief. This last class of persons do not much follow the suggestions of party men or party presses. They have learned to *do* or to *forbear*—

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns them not to do.

Among the evils involved in the discussion in which this committee now is, may be noted some remarkable abstractions, one of which I will mention. It is asserted in the other end of the Capitol, and argued here, that the clause of the Constitution which gives to Congress the power of admitting additional States into the Union, does, by its own terms, allow of none but *States* to be admitted, or perhaps organized territories. This is another of those curiosities that, by proving too much, prove nothing. Why, sir, the order to enlist *soldiers* for the army would, with such a strict construction, allow none but soldiers to be enlisted; so of officers; so of members of Congress—we should be always here, until our body became exhausted. Nay, sir, what do we do with the injunction to man “to take to himself a wife?” You remember the anecdote of the youngster, of your own portion of the Union, who received a monition from his father, that it was time to be steady, make some money, and take a

wife. "Why, sir," said he, "I like the money-making, but whose wife shall I take?" He was a strict constructionist, sir; the girls of the South, as my honorable friend (Mr STANLEY) calls the ladies of North Carolina, would fare badly; the girls of the North, sir, not being such close constructionists, might do better. Sir, you create a monopoly, and widows would be at a premium.

I am aware, sir, that all this is no argument; but some abstractions, like some men—

Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne—
Are touched and moved by ridicule alone.

The honorable gentleman from Maryland (Mr. McLANE) took occasion, in his zeal for the party, to say that the measure which lies at the foundation of all the trouble which we are now meeting—viz., the admission of Texas—was a Democratic, and not a Southern, movement; and I suppose, if we examine the proceedings of Congress on that question, we shall find the names of Northern Democrats recorded in its favor. The gentleman alluded to the Baltimore Convention for proof; but that convention only shows that the wily South contrived to defeat two Northern candidates, and nominate a Southern man. "The South could not have triumphed," it is said, "because Mr. Calhoun had no part in the exertion." Alas, sir, recent events show that that distinguished statesman is no longer the South. He has, indeed, long since, I apprehend, ceased to have aspirations for the Presidency; he has learned that the distinction which is agreeable to him is more likely to be attained by prominent opposition than by quiet, temporary office. Like Arius, he prefers the rank, the influence, and the lasting fame of a heresiarch, to the quiet and temporary honors of the tiara.

Mr. Chairman, there was not a chestnut in the Texan fire that the South did not put into the roast. The hand of the North was undoubtedly employed to bring the treasures out.

Mr. Chairman, gentlemen may treat the question before this House as they please; but the fact that it is before the House, and before the Senate, and before the nation—nay, sir, that it is before all other business, and delays all other business—is sufficient proof of its overshadowing importance. It is the question of the session; and I believe that its importance has served to invest its solution in mystery. Few, sir, are willing to conceive that a question, involving the interests of such a vast territory—the peace, and perhaps the physical integrity, of the nation—can be settled by a reference to a simple principle, which lies at the foundation of our national Government—at the foundation of every State government in the Union—I mean, sir, the inalienable, the indisputable right of the States to make their own municipal laws. The rule which was the basis of the Declaration of Independence, and which is the soul of the National Constitution, has only to be appealed to, and it settles the vexed question upon the grounds which all admit, and which has been triumphantly cited by each division of the Union, if the term division is admissible in regard to our nation. Let us see, sir, how this is to apply to the question before the committee. The war, or rather the peace, with Mexico secured to these United States the possession of a vast territory, which brought with it the laws of the sovereignty for which it had been received—laws which must, by the customs of nations, and the decisions of the United States Court, continue to be operative until new laws and ordinances shall be extended over them.

Mr. Chairman, the people of the United States, who flocked to California with the first intimation of the discovery of gold, were not men to approve of the laws of Mexico; and indeed there were very few to make known those laws there, and fewer to enforce them. Yet these people, emigrants from the various States, were imbued with a reverence for laws, and had a full know-

ledge of the propriety of some machinery of government, by which laws could be enacted, or at least respectably administered. As in the newly settled portion of California the Mexican laws were little known, they sought to take measures to secure for themselves the proper operation of the laws of the United States. But while they deliberated, the Congress of the Union discussed, debated, hesitated, and then failed, to give them what they needed, and left them to ask for what they wanted—what they now claim—a State government. They have proceeded as other people have proceeded; they have deliberately, orderly, and with all republican forms, prepared and adopted a constitution for a sovereign State; they have gone through with political organization, and they have sent to this Congress two Senators and two Representatives, to ask us to sanction the evidences of their State sovereignty, and to give her Representatives seats in our Halls of national legislation.

Is the claim of California to a place in this Union to be refused? If so, on what ground? Not, of course, on the ground that she is not yet organized, and therefore not entitled to admission. I think we have disposed of that abstraction.

We may be told, indeed, that other States have reached the Union through territorial purgation, and that California was bound to take the same course and submit to the same exacting requisition. Sir, the nation and the gentlemen who now oppose the admission of California have not been in the habit of considering precedents of such binding power in the admission of States. Territories and States had, until Texas came, reached us by the treaty-making power; and it was then believed, and is now in some quarters asserted, that it is only by the treaty-making power that this nation can acquire contiguous territory. But the annexation of Texas was a legislative movement, which remains undisputed, and is likely to be undisturbed, unless Texas herself should feel her honor impinged upon by the imputed wrongs to the slave interest, and ask for a restoration to independence. She of course will not, like the Virginia side of the District of Columbia, seek for retrocession to the parent power.

But gentlemen say that there are other territories acquired. Of course there are. But are these territories ready to ask admission, or are they yet in a condition to share with us in national security? We must remember that the peculiar circumstances of California invited thither thousands and thousands of the well-informed people of the United States—a population which, for activity and intelligence, has seldom gone to a new country. Men are there, sir, who understand all the requisites of government—instructed in the science of legislation—in the arts of peace and of war; fresh from the institutions of the eastern portion of the Union, (I mean eastern with regard to California,) as yet uncontaminated with injurious association, and ready and anxious to secure to themselves and their descendants the benefit which the people of the Eastern States enjoy.

But there are other portions of this newly acquired territory; and because the *South* has slavery, she is dreaming constantly of a balance of power. What balance? Is it the business of Congress to strike a balance between slavery and freedom? Are we here, as if for no other purpose than to see that freedom has no advantages? If slavery recedes, as it has receded from the North, must new territories be conquered or purchased to keep up a balance? But I will not pursue the question. There are Territories beside California. The slave States demand that these shall be admitted now, as Territories, without a prohibition of slavery. The free States declare that, if they are admitted, slavery shall be excluded.

Here is issue made—which party shall triumph? Fanatics at the North have

said, Let us dissolve the Union, which allows slavery. Fanatics at the South have said, Let us dissolve this Union, if it will not extend slavery. And men on both sides, whom it will not do to call fanatics, have said, It is better to have disunion, peaceable or warlike, than to give up or submit to the cause of dissension.

An honorable gentleman in this House, in sustaining the claims of the South to extend slavery into New Mexico, asked, with remarkable emphasis, "Why may not the South take thither her chattels, as well as the North? The Northern man may take thither," said he, "his horse, his dog, his ass, and his machinery. Why may not the Southern man carry thither, also, his horse, his dog, his ass, and his slaves?" Mark the enumeration, how it tapers down!

"Fine by degrees, and beautifully less."

The answer to the question, propounded so emphatically, is the constitutional doubt under discussion. But admitting that no such doubt existed—that the matter was one of propriety—it would seem that there might be propounded another question.

When the Northern man goes into New Mexico, and takes with him his horse, dog, ass, and a five hundred man-power machine, and assists to form a State, why must he, with all these, count but as one man in the representation on this floor; while the Southern man, who takes thither his horse, dog, ass, and five hundred slaves, is reckoned here as three hundred and one men?

In this state of things, Mr. Chairman, we now are. Some of the Southern States have taken measures preparatory to a conditional dissolution of the Union—boldly avowed, and coolly defended; and a few elderly women at the North ask for a fulfilment of that purpose, if it can be done *peaceably*. What is the remedy? So true as a territorial government is proposed for New Mexico, so true will an attempt be made to apply the proviso—and so true as that proviso shall be applied, so true will the South be justified in receding. So some of the South declare. Can no remedy be found—no proposition be made, which both parties can accept, without compromising a principle? It appears to me, sir, the very principle of Government, which we boast as the distinguishing feature of Federal republicanism, is that upon which we can all rally, and which serves as a solution of the difficulty before us—the right of the people, viz., to establish their own government. California presents her plan—why not accept it? Because it is contended New Mexico is not included. Has New Mexico applied?

"But we wish to have slavery in New Mexico," says the South. Well, since the North says she will not consent to slavery in the Territories, and the South says she will have slavery in New Mexico, is it not republican—is it not a fair compromise—to ask New Mexico what she thinks?

Close constructionists are always liable to lead their followers into difficulties, by creating precedents which it becomes exceedingly painful to adopt.

Years ago, it was earnestly contended, when Territories acquired importance only by the augmentation of population in the portions of the original possessions, that the authority which the Constitution gives Congress to enact all necessary laws for the government of the Territories, extended only to the power of giving such minute and local statutes as were indispensable to form the nucleus of a social gathering, and not that complete form of government which provides for these Territories the appliances, dignities, and conveniences that make them nearly equal to sovereign States, and which induced many of them to retain their territorial form of government for the sake of receiving national appropriations for public buildings, and other general conveniences, until they are goaded by party demands or personal pride, to seek their gratification

in election of two Senators, and to have the votes of an apportioned representation.

And yet, sir, we have a new Territory under an established form of government, with municipal laws suited to the genius and habits of the people; and we wish to disturb all this, and force upon them a territorial government, before we have infused into them the healthful ingredients of our own population, and prepared them for what they need, and what we require.

Admit California, with such institutions as she desires, and wait a year, (surely we are not in such hot haste at the South as to refuse that)—wait one year or so, and see what New Mexico will ask. Is hers a soil or climate that is specially appropriate to slavery?—then it is probable that she may, as a State, desire such an institution. I hope not. If neither climate nor soil is favorable, the South will not of course jeopard its property by forcing it, for the sake of *honor*, where it can produce no *profit*.

Is not this a proper deference to the principles of republicanism—is it not a fair compromise of measures, without an impingement upon principles? Why not then consent to this? Is it because just such a measure as I have proposed to the committee is the plan of the Administration? Must discord be produced and disunion threatened, in order to oppose the President and Cabinet? Does an opposition, however else discordant, unite to thwart the Administration, and build hopes upon the slavery attachment of a few of the party adherents of the President? Let that party, then, which sympathizes with the Executive, learn wisdom from their opponents, and show that they can rest securely upon the principles of our Republican Government, and sustain their party allegiance without a violation of their national attachments. It is a beautiful illustration of the purity of our party principles, that they conform to the maxims of the Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence.

But disunion is threatened, disunion is feared

I have not time—I have no inclination—to follow this further. Sir, a war for a share of the spoils would be, not an honor, but a shame to the South; it would pour upon her the discredit of avarice, and the disgrace of defeat, from both of which her good genius should willingly save her.

I remember few such wars—none that resulted in the benefit of those who proclaimed them. Sacred history has one instance—it is that of the attempt of the Ephraimites to dissolve the union, because they were not called in to what they called their share of the rich spoils of the Ammonitish war. But Jephtha dispersed the host; and the borders of the Cumberland may be politically as fatal a place to the disunionists as the passes of Jordan were physically to the rebelling Ephraimites.

What a glorious revenge, Mr. Chairman, would Mexico have for her defeat, in such an outbreak as is threatened. She would find in it a consolation for her losses in Palo Alto, Buena Vista, Chepultepec, and the Halls of Montezuma themselves.

Let us thank God, Mr. Chairman, that we have at the head of this Government—this national Government—the Government of the whole nation—one who is skilful in battle against the enemies of his country, wherever found, and calm, and wise, and prudent, and conciliatory in his councils.

Well seems he born to be with honor crowned,
So well the lore he knows of regiment;
Peerless in fight—in councils grave and sound;
The double gift of glory excellent.

Mr. Chairman, gentlemen have, and, as I think, with great propriety, alluded to the opinions, views, and resolutions of each of their respective States and their peculiar districts. This, perhaps, is one of the best means of making

the committee acquainted with the opinions of the people; and as the custom is so honorably sustained, I venture to express my view of the feelings and principles of Pennsylvania, one of whose twenty-four Representatives I have the honor to be. I of course must be understood as speaking of my State, not for her: that would be a presumption of which I am incapable. And I beg at the same time to say, that while I speak as a Pennsylvanian, I do not forget nor disregard the fact, that I am a national representative and legislator. Pennsylvania, sir, has, and manifests a deep interest in the question now before the committee, whether we regard the simple proposition to admit California as a State, or include the dependent, though most prominent question, of slavery.

As to California, sir, I believe Pennsylvania, who always means right, taking the Constitution and the rights of man as her guide, believes that a country thus acquired, thus peopled, and thus demanding admittance into the Union, should be heard, and should have her request granted.

On the subject of slavery, sir, Pennsylvania has but one opinion. She believes it to be injurious and demoralizing. She, as an independent State, dismissed it from her territory, and as a member of the Union, she would willingly see it abolished throughout the country. But Pennsylvania contends not against the Constitution. She discusses, sir, every public measure with freedom. But when she knows that the organic law of the land is plain, she pauses, and with a faith that does credit to her patriotism, she says: "The Constitution has spoken—the controversy is ended." A love of freedom distinguishes the people of that State in an eminent degree. It pervades all the institutions of the Commonwealth. It is the instinct of her moral, social, political, and religious life.

Some months since, when a young member of the present Pennsylvania delegation went to take leave of his friend—an ancient relative—that person, in bestowing a parting blessing, said: "You will have much before you in Congress to employ your mind, and one vexed question will present itself for discussion. Fanaticism may mystify on one side, and interest conceal truth on the other; and you will be, as others have been, perhaps—left in doubt as to the course you should pursue. In all such instances, be true to yourself, your principles, and your State, and *give your vote for Liberty.*"

There spoke Pennsylvania, sir—good, plain old Pennsylvania—frequently at fault among the abstractions of the South and the philosophy of the North, but still right in her instincts—conservative in her action.

Sir, permit me to say, that while Pennsylvania has no disposition to disturb the compromises of the Constitution, or to violate any compact recently made, she is steadily, firmly, resolutely fixed in her opinion against the extension of slavery over one foot of the Territories yet unoccupied by that institution. It does not require a vote of the legislature, nor a meeting of the people, to instruct her Representative here. I believe most of her Representatives on this floor come imbued with that sentiment. She will abide by the Constitution herself, and demand that others shall do the same.

"But suppose, in the doubtful case of the Territories, where Pennsylvania will declare that slavery ought not to go by a vote of Congress, suppose that the vote of Congress should send it thither; what would then be the action of Pennsylvania?" I answer, solemn remonstrance, sir; reproof and dealings with those of her own Representatives who should betray her principles, but respectful submission to that majority whose right it is to rule.

Mr. Chairman, Pennsylvania is frequently denominated abroad, and has been styled on this floor, the "KEY-STONE STATE." She deserves that title, as much for her service as her position. When the untutored spirits of the North

or the South have pointed toward a consolidated government, and seemed to desire to disturb the substantive position of each portion of the Federal arch, then, sir, the strong republican sense of Pennsylvania, her pure patriotism, and her just views of the nature of this Government, have made her, like the key-stone of the arch, the point which sustained the pressure and prevented the centripetal tendency, and preserved the arch of the Republic.

But, sir, there is a new state of affairs—a new and opposite danger. Now, when consolidation is found to be no longer possible, with such a key-stone in the arch, we find a tendency in the spandrels of that arch to settle outward—a sort of gentle, peaceful proclivity in the North, and hints of a forceful dismemberment at the South. What is the key-stone to do in this state of affairs? Her passiveness, so long effective, will no longer avail. If the outward tendency is persisted in, the central portion must fall, and the key-stone remain above the ruins of that arch which it could not save.

What is Pennsylvania to do, in this state of things? Sir, Pennsylvania regards disunion as treason; and she knows but one mode of cure for that disorder—a mode that is to be varied only by the number to be dealt with. I may not have expressed the opinions of all my colleagues, when I referred to the determination of Pennsylvania to agree to no additional slave Territories; but, sir, there is a sentiment in which all Pennsylvania can and do concur; and I appeal to my colleagues, on both sides of the House—to Democrats and Whigs—to the honorable member who gives his name to the rock of offence in the proviso—to all of them—whether Pennsylvania does not stand pledged, by her principles and her conduct, to sustain the Union by whomsoever assailed? I appeal to them to say, whether she who is willing to send her sons beyond the lines of the State and the nation to meet the British, the Indian, or the Mexican, to repel aggression, punish injury, or extend our limits—will not be ready to do as much to preserve that Union which she has been so ready to extend?

Honorable gentlemen have talked of regiments to be furnished by their States, to defend and preserve the Union. Sir, I have no mission here to threaten or to taunt; but I say, sir, Pennsylvania has a right, and she has a power to do that work. From the tops of her mountains, from this side and beyond the mountains, she will gather her legions for the Union. Nay, sir, from beneath her mountains she will call up her swart sons by thousands, and with the magic wand of patriotism she will, if summoned to the work, bring forth those who are ready to peril limb and life for the integrity of that Government, and the freedom of that soil, beneath which they find protection and employment.

I say this in no spirit of hostility or unkindness; but honorable gentlemen have thought it meet to proffer the abilities of their respective States, and though Pennsylvania, sir, is not much in the habit of telling what she *will do*, nor of boasting of what she has done, yet the humblest of her Representatives may be allowed to say, that in endurance of the will of a majority, or resistance of the violence of a minority, she will be found faithful to her position; faithful to her lofty mission of union and independence.

But, sir, Pennsylvania has no idea of having any demand made upon her military prowess and munitions to sustain the Union. Even in the present unfortunate agitation Pennsylvania sees in herself, and others around her, more effective and permanent instruments of good. She has established numerous relations with her sister States, which give efficacy to her attempts to restore harmony. If the North grows sullen, she can warn them with her coals; if the tempest of disunion gathers in the South, and “threatens to rend freedom’s temple asunder,” Pennsylvania imitates her own Franklin, and extends with the hand of truth the instrument of affection toward the storm

cloud, and conducts thence and diverts from all the fluid that might have prostrated the pillars of our political fabric. Asking nothing that ought to offend, and submitting to all that the Constitution warrants, Pennsylvania feels that she has a right to speak and to act, and she points to the social and domestic relations of her people with the South; to her constantly augmenting commerce; her steamboats that reach the sea ports: and her railroads that will overlap the interior of the South: she points to these as a means of union and peace; and these—

————— like a garland of flowers,
 Shall entwine all our States in a band—
 Confirm and confederate our wide-spreading powers,
 Our wealth and our wisdom expand.

One word more, sir, with reference to my immediate district and constituency, and their relations with the vexed question before us, and the alternative presented by a part of the South. Philadelphia feels her interest identified with the South, and she looks, therefore, with earnestness to the action of Congress on this matter. She knows how much she risks by disunion, and she comprehends the value of the object.

Never people, Mr. Chairman, had a greater veneration and love for a merely earthly object than have the citizens of Philadelphia for the Union—that Union which, with the independence and the Constitution of the nation, is said to be the country. These are convertible terms, because one cannot exist without the other. These, then, sir, are the *saving* principles of our nation. Shall not Philadelphia love them and defend them? Sir, she is the foster-mother of both; the Bethlehem of the nation-saving gift. And will she forget her duties? “Can a mother forget her child?”

Sir, I speak advisedly when I say Philadelphia can know only one country—one Constitution. And such people are not likely to be remiss in the duty of defending that country and that Constitution against all aggression; and what is more, sir, she is as ready and as willing to yield to the feelings and wishes of all, within the bounds of principle, to keep alive a spirit of love and a spirit of union, by a submission to reasonable sacrifice.

The honorable gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. WINTHROP) concluded his stirring and eloquent philippic, a few weeks since, with a notice that he was speaking for Faneuil Hall—Faneuil Hall, with all its sacred remembrances—“not as she is sometimes, when desecrated by fanatics, but as she is when she gives forth the sentiments of her early patriots.”

May I not be permitted to say, sir, that I speak for Independence Hall, about which cluster the remembrances of the most glorious events that mark the annals of nations. I speak for Independence Hall, as it stands dark amid the clustering beauties of modern construction—for Independence Hall,

“Grown dim by age, yet worshipped in decay.”

I speak for Independence Hall, the manger and the cradle of Independence, whither the star of liberty guided the wise and the good; and they came and did reverence. Such as that sanctified place was in 1776, by the virtue of our fathers—such as it is now, by the patriotism of their children—such, sir, as it ever will be, by the inherited and cultivated virtues of those who derive their political inspiration from its historical associations, and have “virtue, liberty, and independence” enough to follow the action, imitate the endurance, and maintain the glorious legacy of their fathers.

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